

**COUNCIL**

**111th Session**

**DRAFT REPORT ON THE  
111TH SESSION OF THE COUNCIL**

Geneva

Tuesday, 24 November, to Thursday, 26 November 2020  
Rapporteur: Mr M.von UNGERN-STERNBERG (Germany)



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### List of abbreviations

|                |                                                                                              |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| COVID-19       | Coronavirus disease 2019                                                                     |
| ICT            | Information and communication technology                                                     |
| Migration MPTF | Start-up Fund for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, or Migration Multi-partner Trust Fund |
| NGO            | Non-governmental organization                                                                |
| OSI            | Operational Support Income                                                                   |



## DRAFT REPORT ON THE 111TH SESSION OF THE COUNCIL

### Introduction

1. Pursuant to Resolution No. 1384 of 29 November 2019, the Council convened for its 111th Session on Tuesday, 24 November 2020. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was chaired from the Centre International de Conférences, Geneva, but the participants took part via remote connection. Five meetings were held. The meetings were chaired by Mr E.P. Garcia (Philippines) and Mr M. von Ungern-Sternberg (Germany).

### Attendance<sup>1</sup>

2. The following Member States were represented.

|                                  |               |                                  |                     |                                    |
|----------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| Afghanistan                      | China         | Haiti                            | Mauritania          | Seychelles                         |
| Albania                          | Colombia      | Holy See                         | Mauritius           | Sierra Leone                       |
| Algeria                          | Congo         | Honduras                         | Mexico              | Slovakia                           |
| Angola                           | Costa Rica    | Hungary                          | Mongolia            | Slovenia                           |
| Argentina                        | Côte d'Ivoire | Iceland                          | Montenegro          | South Africa                       |
| Armenia                          | Croatia       | India                            | Morocco             | Spain                              |
| Australia                        | Cuba          | Iran (Islamic Republic of)       | Mozambique          | Sri Lanka                          |
| Austria                          | Cyprus        | Ireland                          | Myanmar             | Sudan                              |
| Azerbaijan                       | Czechia       | Israel                           | Namibia             | Sweden                             |
| Bahamas                          | Denmark       | Italy                            | Nepal               | Switzerland                        |
| Bangladesh                       | Djibouti      | Jamaica                          | Netherlands         | Thailand                           |
| Belarus                          | Ecuador       | Japan                            | Nicaragua           | Togo                               |
| Belgium                          | Egypt         | Jordan                           | Niger               | Tunisia                            |
| Bolivia (Plurinational State of) | El Salvador   | Kazakhstan                       | Nigeria             | Turkey                             |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina           | Eritrea       | Kenya                            | Norway              | Uganda                             |
| Botswana                         | Estonia       | Kyrgyzstan                       | Pakistan            | Ukraine                            |
| Brazil                           | Eswatini      | Lao People's Democratic Republic | Panama              | United Kingdom                     |
| Bulgaria                         | Ethiopia      | Latvia                           | Paraguay            | United Republic of Tanzania        |
| Burkina Faso                     | Fiji          | Lesotho                          | Peru                | United States of America           |
| Burundi                          | Finland       | Libya                            | Philippines         | Uruguay                            |
| Cabo Verde                       | France        | Lithuania                        | Poland              | Vanuatu                            |
| Cambodia                         | Gabon         | Luxembourg                       | Portugal            | Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) |
| Cameroon                         | Gambia        | Madagascar                       | Republic of Korea   | Viet Nam                           |
| Canada                           | Georgia       | Maldives                         | Republic of Moldova | Yemen                              |
| Chad                             | Germany       | Mali                             | Romania             | Zambia                             |
| Chile                            | Ghana         | Malta                            | Rwanda              | Zimbabwe                           |
|                                  | Greece        |                                  | Senegal             |                                    |
|                                  | Guatemala     |                                  | Serbia              |                                    |

3. A representative of the Russian Federation,<sup>2</sup> which was an applicant for membership of the Organization, also attended.

4. Indonesia, Malaysia<sup>3</sup> and Qatar were represented by observers.

<sup>1</sup> The list of participants is contained in document C/111/12. Unless otherwise indicated, all documents and slide presentations are available on the [Council](#) section of the IOM website.

<sup>2</sup> See paragraph 28.

<sup>3</sup> See paragraph 35.

5. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations, the United Nations Population Fund and the World Food Programme were represented by observers.

6. The Arab Parliament, the Eurasian Economic Commission, the European Public Law Organization, the European Union, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, the International Commission on Missing Persons, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Organization of la Francophonie, the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean and the Sovereign Order of Malta were represented by observers as were the following entities: “La Caixa” Foundation, the Africa Humanitarian Action, the International Catholic Migration Commission, the Refugee Education Trust and SOS Children’s Village International.

#### **Opening of the session and credentials of representatives and observers**

7. The outgoing Chairperson, Mr M. Jespersen (Denmark), opened the session on Tuesday, 24 November 2020, at 10.10 a.m.

8. The Council noted that the Director General had examined the credentials of the representatives of the Member States listed in paragraph 2 and of the Russian Federation and found them to be in order, and that he had been advised of the names of the observers for the non-member States, international governmental organizations and NGOs listed in paragraphs 4 to 6.

#### **Formal endorsement of the modalities for convening the 111th Session of the Council**

9. Pursuant to a request from one Member State, and in accordance with Rule 5, paragraph 1(b) of the Rules of Procedure of the Council, the Council confirmed that, owing to local COVID-19 restrictions, its 111th session would be held in line with the modalities set out in the note sent to all Member States on 12 November 2020.

#### **Report of the Chairperson of the Council**

10. The outgoing Chairperson said that he was deeply grateful to the Member States for the level of commitment and flexibility that they had shown in the extraordinary circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. He expressed particular satisfaction at the unanimous decision to strengthen the Organization’s leadership by appointing, as of 2021, two Deputy Directors General, one focusing on operations, the other on management and reform. The decision meant that IOM would be better equipped to cope with the demands of Member States and to meet its new and growing responsibilities within the United Nations system.

11. He was also pleased to report that the Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee was once again fully formed and that its new members would take up their functions in the coming weeks.

12. In view of the steady growth in the Organization’s scope, field presence, budget and workforce over the previous 10 years, it was essential to continue efforts to reinforce its core structures. The Member States had a key role to play in steering that process, through IOM’s governing bodies. Their collective engagement in setting the Organization’s strategic direction was essential to ensuring continued transparency and accountability.

13. The ultimate aim was to preserve IOM’s essential characteristics (flexibility, agility and responsiveness) while allowing it to deliver on its new responsibilities. Events in 2020 had

demonstrated the added value that those essential characteristics represented, as the Organization had deployed considerable resources to support global efforts to tackle the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on vulnerable populations, including migrants and internally displaced persons. In that respect, he paid tribute to IOM staff members around the world, who had remained on the front lines of humanitarian work, sometimes at great personal cost.

14. The Director General thanked the outgoing Chairperson for his leadership in an unprecedented situation. He was to be commended for having risen to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic to the usual conduct of business and for having obtained a consensus on the restructuring of the Organization's senior management.

#### **Election of officers**

15. The Council elected the following officers:

|                          |                                           |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Chairperson:             | Mr Evan Garcia (Philippines)              |
| First Vice-Chairperson:  | Ms Socorro Flores Liera (Mexico)          |
| Second Vice-Chairperson: | Mr Lansana Alison Gberie (Sierra Leone)   |
| Rapporteur:              | Mr Michael von Ungern-Sternberg (Germany) |

#### **Adoption of the agenda**

16. The Council had before it the provisional agenda for the session (document C/111/1/Rev.1).

17. The representative of Ukraine proposed that item 7 (admission of new Member States and observers) be removed from the provisional agenda. In line with the note on the modalities for convening the session during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council should only address matters that were essential to the functioning of the Organization. Discussion of less critical issues, especially those requiring a formal vote, should be deferred to the next in-person session.

18. The Director General explained that, in placing item 7 on the agenda, the Administration had acted in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Council. Whenever it received a request to join the Organization as a Member or observer, the Administration first checked that the application met the relevant conditions before placing it on the agenda of the next Council session. New Members and observers were traditionally admitted by consensus. That being said, the Council was sovereign in deciding its agenda and it was therefore up to the Member States to decide which items they wanted to retain.

19. One group of Member States considered that the modalities for convening the session, while limiting the proceedings to the extent possible, were not intended to prevent the Member States from exercising the oversight required for the Organization to function. It was therefore in favour of adopting the agenda as circulated in document C/111/1/Rev.1.

20. In view of the Director General's explanation, the Council adopted the provisional agenda contained in document C/111/1/Rev.1 and subsequently issued as document C/111/13.

### **Status report on outstanding contributions to the Administrative Part of the Budget and Member State voting rights**

21. The Administration reported that, thanks to the payments received since the publication of document C/111/4/Rev.1, the total amount of outstanding contributions to the Administrative Part of the Budget for 2020 and previous years had been reduced to approximately CHF 21 million but remained higher than at the same time in 2019. Member States were encouraged to settle their unpaid contributions or to contact the Administration with a view to concluding a flexible payment plan. As a result of the contributions received, the number of Member States subject to Article 4 of the Constitution had fallen from 30 to 29 (Sudan had been removed from the list). Fourteen countries remained deprived of the right to vote. Payments for 2020 had also been received from Cabo Verde, Madagascar, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda and Ukraine.

22. The Council took note of and endorsed document C/111/4/Rev.1 and the additional information on payments received provided by the Administration.

### **Admission of new Member States and observers**

#### **(a) Application for membership of the Organization**

23. The Council had before it document C/111/9 (Application by the Russian Federation for membership of the Organization) and the relevant draft resolution.

24. The representative of Ukraine asked that the application for membership by the Russian Federation be put to a vote.

25. The Legal Counsel said that in accordance with Rule 40 of the Rules of Procedure of the Council, the vote would be by roll call. Member States that had lost the right to vote under Article 4 of the Constitution would not be called to vote. Furthermore, Article 2(b) of the Constitution required a majority of two-thirds of members present and voting on questions of membership, and Rule 38, paragraph 4 of the Rules of Procedure of the Council provided that “members present and voting” referred to Member States casting an affirmative or negative vote; those abstaining were considered not to have voted.

26. A vote was taken by roll call, the names of the Member States being called in English alphabetical order, starting with Honduras, which had been drawn by lot.

27. The Chairperson announced the result of the vote and expressed regret that a small number of Member States had been unable to vote due to technical issues. The result of the vote was as follows:

|     |                                   |     |
|-----|-----------------------------------|-----|
| (a) | Member States voting:             | 116 |
| (b) | Abstentions:                      | 2   |
| (c) | Member States present and voting: | 114 |
| (d) | Two-thirds majority:              | 76  |
| (e) | Votes in favour:                  | 112 |
| (f) | Votes against:                    | 2   |



**Member States in favour:** Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Libya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe

**Member States against:** Georgia, Ukraine

**Member States abstaining:** Honduras, United States of America

28. The Council adopted Resolution No. 1386 of 24 November 2020 admitting the Russian Federation as a Member of the Organization subject to the completion by that country of the internal administrative formalities required to ratify the IOM Constitution and its notifying the Director General accordingly.

29. The representative of Ukraine noted with regret the result of the vote, the process for which had been imperfect in his view, and said that support for multilateralism and diversity should not be at the expense of respect for international humanitarian law. The Organization was faced with the paradox of having to resolve the problems of migration and forced displacement that arose from the actions of new Member States themselves. It was important for the Russian Federation to ratify the IOM Constitution.

30. Both the Permanent Observer for the European Union and the representative of the United Kingdom said that, while they understood the concerns expressed by Ukraine, they had voted in favour of membership of the Russian Federation as they supported the aim of universal membership of IOM and saw value in engaging in multilateralism on mutually important topics. They recalled that new Member States were obliged to respect and support IOM's humanitarian mandate, Constitution and rules.

31. The representative of the United States of America, speaking in explanation of vote, said that the United States had abstained in order to express concern at the admission of the Russian Federation to IOM. He valued the fact that the Council had conducted its work for nearly 70 years on a consensus basis and regretted that a vote had been called on the admission of a new Member State; he trusted that would not set a precedent for the future work of the Council.

32. The same representative, recalling that in 1994 and 2014 the Administration had assured Member States it would only submit membership applications for consideration once the applicant country had completed the required internal administrative formalities, expressed concern that the Russian Federation had nevertheless been admitted to IOM before ratifying the Organization's Constitution. In addition, there had been regrettable delays in sharing the application information with IOM Member States; the process to expand the Organization's membership should be transparent and give Member States sufficient time to evaluate new applications.

33. The representative of the Russian Federation said that he welcomed the result of the vote and looked forward to further constructive cooperation with IOM in seeking solutions to major migration crises around the world. The Russian Federation was improving its legal framework for migration, and draft legislation on ratification of the IOM Constitution was expected to be adopted very soon.

34. The Director General welcomed the Russian Federation to the Organization and congratulated the Council on its decision. It was true that decisions on membership had previously been taken by consensus, but Member States were entitled to request a vote on any given agenda item. While the vote had been fully in line with the IOM Constitution and the Rules of Procedure of the Council, it would not set a precedent. He did not believe that there had been any delay in sharing the Russian Federation's application for admission with Member States; all documents had been distributed in line with the Rules of Procedure of the Council. Similarly, it was not the first time the Council had been asked to decide on the admission of a Member State that had not yet finalized the relevant internal administrative procedures; it was understood that full membership was only acquired upon their completion. The Organization would continue to cooperate closely with Ukraine, and with all other Member States, in order to guarantee the protection and safety of migrants, wherever they were.

**(b) Application for representation by an observer**

35. The Council adopted by acclamation Resolution No. 1387 of 24 November 2020 granting observer status to Malaysia at its meetings.

36. The representative of Malaysia thanked Member States for accepting his country's request to be accorded observer status. As both a transit and a destination country, Malaysia faced many challenges in managing irregular migration and highly valued the assistance provided by the IOM Country Office in Malaysia. Having observer status would offer it opportunities for greater interaction with other Member States to foster an open and balanced exchange of views on migration and its underlying causes. He was confident that Malaysia would benefit from greater technical support and expertise, best practices in the area of migration management, and greater coordination in efforts to tackle human trafficking.

37. The Director General congratulated Malaysia on obtaining observer status and noted that the country, which had a longstanding relationship with IOM, played a key part in migratory flows in South-East Asia owing to its geographical position. He looked forward to working with Malaysia on implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

**Report of the Director General**

38. The Director General submitted his report to the Council (C/111/11), accompanied by a slide presentation. He also paid tribute to the three IOM staff members who had died after having contracted COVID-19.

39. The Council took note of the report of the Director General (C/111/11).

**Draft reports on the 110th Session and the Fourth Special Session of the Council**

40. The Council adopted Resolution No. 1388 of 24 November 2020 approving the reports on its 110th Session (C/110/15) and its Fourth Special Session (C/Sp/4/5).

## **Report on matters discussed at the Twenty-sixth and Twenty-seventh Sessions of the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance**

### **(a) Summary update on the Programme and Budget for 2020**

41. The Standing Committee Rapporteur said that, at its Twenty-seventh Session, the Standing Committee had examined the document entitled Summary update on the Programme and Budget for 2020 (C/111/7), in which it was reported that the Administrative Part of the Budget remained unchanged at CHF 52,242,614, the Operational Part of the Budget had increased from USD 1.732 billion to USD 1.940 billion, and the level of OSI remained at USD 123 million. In line with Standing Committee Resolution No. 24 of 1 July 2020 on the Revision of the Programme and Budget for 2020, which authorized the Director General to access resources in the OSI reserve up to an amount of USD 14.25 million, the Administration had allocated USD 10.16 million to fund a number of initiatives.

42. The Standing Committee had recommended that the Council take note of the Summary update on the Programme and Budget for 2020.

43. The Council took note of document C/111/7.

### **(b) Programme and Budget for 2021**

44. The Standing Committee Rapporteur said that, at the Standing Committee's Twenty-seventh Session, the Administration had proposed that the Administrative Part of the Budget amount to CHF 52,242,614. The Operational Part of the Budget had been projected at USD 913.4 million, which was 6.41 per cent higher than the 2020 budget presented at the same time the previous year. The projected level of OSI – USD 128 million – had been calculated based on the previous year's results and current and expected trends. The budget proposal had been prepared on the basis of the proposed amendments to the budgetary regulations and practices discussed in the Working Group on Budget Reform and described in document S/27/12/Rev.1.

45. The Administration had explained that the addition of a second Deputy Director General post and associated support structures would not affect Member States' financial contributions. Moreover, in response to questions regarding the cost of the ongoing internal governance reforms, it had explained that the Business Transformation process, a key element of those reforms, represented the Organization's biggest financial burden, because it involved the replacement of the enterprise resource planning system. A decision had also been taken to upgrade the security of ICT systems, as a result of increased threats.

46. Following a discussion, the Standing Committee had taken note of the Programme and Budget for 2020, as set out in document C/111/6, and recommended that the Council approve CHF 52,242,614 for the Administrative Part of the Budget and USD 913.4 million for the Operational Part of the Budget.

47. The Council approved document C/111/6 and adopted Resolution No. 1389 of 24 November 2020 on the Programme and Budget for 2021.

### **(c) Update to budget regulations and practices**

48. The Standing Committee Rapporteur said that at the Twenty-seventh Session of the Standing Committee, the Administration had introduced document S/27/12/Rev.1, the annex of which contained proposed amendments to the budget regulations and practices outlined in Standing Committee Resolution No. 18 of 27 June 2018, which had been discussed in the Working Group on Budget Reform. The Administration had reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring Member State

oversight of drawdowns from the OSI reserve. The proposed changes would improve flexibility while maintaining full transparency.

49. The Standing Committee had taken note of document S/27/12/Rev.1 and recommended that the Council adopt the proposed draft resolution amending the budget regulations and practices.

50. The Council adopted Resolution No. 1390 of 24 November 2020 on budget regulations and practices.

**(d) Plan for the IOM Headquarters building**

51. The Standing Committee Rapporteur said that at the Twenty-seventh Session of the Standing Committee, the Administration had introduced document S/27/13/Rev.1, entitled Plans for the IOM Headquarters building: update 4, which contained a draft resolution (Annex II) on the new Headquarters building. The document contained detailed information about the steps taken by the Administration to consult with experts and undertake various assessments of the project, as well as a revised projected cost estimate of CHF 72 million. Following a discussion in which Member States had expressed broad support, the Administration had proposed adding a new paragraph to the preamble of the draft resolution to explain that, in addition to the loan for the project, the Organization would have to cover CHF 10.4 million for movable assets in the new building, the cost of which could not be included in the host Government loan. The Administration had issued document C/111/10 to explain the amendment to the draft resolution, which was presented to the Council in its entirety as document C/111/L/6.

52. The Standing Committee had taken note of document S/27/13/Rev.1 and recommended that the Council adopt the draft resolution with the proposed amendments to the preamble.

53. The Council adopted Resolution No. 1391 of 24 November 2020 on the new Headquarters building.

**(e) Report on the privileges and immunities granted to the Organization by States**

54. The Standing Committee Rapporteur said that at its Twenty-seventh Session, the Standing Committee had been presented with the seventh annual report of the Director General on improvements in the privileges and immunities granted to the Organization by States (document S/27/5). During the reporting period, agreements with four countries on privileges and immunities had entered into force, bringing to 100 the total number of Member States, observer States and other places where the Organization had been granted full privileges and immunities that met the criteria contained in Council Resolution No. 1266 of 26 November 2013.

55. The Standing Committee had taken note of the report and recommended that the Council remain seized of the matter and reiterate its call to all States to grant the Organization privileges and immunities substantially similar to those of the United Nations specialized agencies.

56. The Council endorsed the Standing Committee's recommendation and reiterated its call to all States to grant the Organization privileges and immunities substantially similar to those of the United Nations specialized agencies.

**(f) Other items discussed at the Twenty-sixth and Twenty-seventh Sessions of the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance**

57. The Standing Committee Rapporteur briefed the Council on a number of other items discussed at the Standing Committee's Twenty-sixth and Twenty-seventh Sessions.

**(i) Resolutions and decisions**

58. In pursuance of Council Resolution No. 1384 of 29 November 2019, the Standing Committee had adopted the following resolutions on 1 July 2020, at its Twenty-sixth Session: Resolution No. 22 taking note of the Annual Report for 2019, Resolution No. 23 approving the Financial Report for the year ended 31 December 2019, and Resolution No. 24 approving the Revision of the Programme and Budget for 2020.

59. During that session, the Standing Committee had also approved the IOM assessment scale for 2021, as illustrated in document S/26/3, and had agreed to review the assessment scale for 2022 during the first half of 2021.

**(ii) Exchange of views on items proposed by the membership**

60. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting reduced agenda, the exchange of views on items proposed by the membership had not taken place during the Twenty-sixth Session of the Standing Committee.

61. At the Twenty-seventh Session, the Administration had introduced the document entitled Sustaining and scaling private sector engagement to protect migrant workers (S/27/3). During the ensuing discussion, Member States had commented on the document, the activities carried out by the Organization, and their own experiences in that area.

62. The Standing Committee had taken note of the document prepared by the Administration and of the comments made by Member States.

**(iii) Other reports and updates**

63. Although not discussed at the Twenty-sixth Session of the Standing Committee as a result of its reduced agenda, document S/26/5, containing the final report on the activities of the IOM Development Fund for 2019, had been sent to Member States for information on 24 June 2020.

64. At its sessions, the Standing Committee had also considered and taken note of the following reports and updates:

- Updates on the application of the Internal Governance Framework
- Status reports on outstanding contributions to the Administrative Part of the Budget and Member State voting rights
- Statement and report of the External Auditor
- Progress report on the implementation of the External Auditor's recommendations
- Update on risk management
- Proposal to amend the name and terms of reference of the Working Group on IOM–UN Relations and Related Issues
- Update on the IOM migration data strategy

- Status report on the IOM Development Fund (1 January to 30 September 2020)
- Report on the work of the Office of the Inspector General

65. The Council took note of the decisions and documents referred to in paragraphs 57 to 64 above.

**(iv) Reports on the Twenty-sixth and Twenty-seventh Sessions of the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance**

66. The Council adopted Resolution No. 1392 of 24 November 2020 taking note of the reports on the Twenty-sixth and Twenty-seventh Sessions of the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance.

**Date and place of the next sessions**

67. The Council adopted Resolution No. 1393 of 24 November 2020, according to which its next regular session was tentatively scheduled for November 2021 and the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance was invited to meet at least twice during 2021.

**General debate<sup>4</sup>**

68. Statements were made or provided in writing by the following Member States listed in alphabetical order: Afghanistan, Algeria, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan (also on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement), Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Haiti, Holy See, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Libya, Maldives, Malta, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, Niger (on behalf of the African Group), Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

69. A statements was also delivered by the Permanent Observer for the European Union on behalf of the Union's members.

70. Statements were also made or provided in writing by six observers (International Catholic Migration Commission, International Commission on Missing Persons, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, SOS Children's Villages International, Sovereign Order of Malta and United Nations Population Fund).

71. The Council extended a warm welcome to the Russian Federation, soon to become the Organization's newest Member State, and to Malaysia, which had obtained observer status.

72. Council members and observers underscored the huge impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people's health and mobility, national economies and the social fabric of States, with migrants and other vulnerable groups bearing the brunt. The resulting steep drop in remittances was of particular

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<sup>4</sup> Texts of statements, as and if received from Member States and observers, are available on the [Council](#) section of the IOM website.

concern. The pandemic had shown that poor migration management led to human rights violations, widening inequality, greater vulnerability and worsening discrimination. No country could manage migration or overcome the effects of the pandemic on its own, without international cooperation and the support of multilateral mechanisms such as the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

73. IOM was praised for its flexible and rapid response to the crisis brought about by the pandemic. The Organization had maintained its activities and programmes even when mobility was hindered, and had kept those living in camps as safe and healthy as possible. The Global Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19 was particularly welcome, as was the assistance provided to Member States in the form of medical equipment and awareness-raising, and for the transportation of migrants who had been stranded by the closure of international borders and national lockdown measures. Deep appreciation was also expressed to the Organization's staff for staying and delivering in an effort to assist vulnerable migrants. A crisis that affected human mobility to such an extent demonstrated the clear added value of IOM. One Member State cautioned, however, that IOM activities to assist migrants and internally displaced persons in the context of the pandemic should be carried out in a responsible manner and in accordance with the capabilities of individual countries.

74. In the view of many Member States, it was nonetheless heartening to see that the pandemic had also spurred recognition of the valuable contribution of migrants in many essential sectors, such as health, agriculture and scientific research and development. Migrants had always been drivers of development, contributing to economic growth, innovation and workplace diversity, and helping to address labour market shortages. They would play a key role in post-pandemic economic recovery plans, which must include them as well.

75. The pandemic had served to highlight the relevance of the Global Compact, which provided the requisite framework of solidarity, shared responsibility, international cooperation and unity of purpose. In evidence of their support for the Compact, several Member States said that they had made voluntary contributions to the United Nations Network on Migration, which was helping Member States to implement the Compact, or to the Migration MPTF. They lauded the Director General's role as Coordinator of the Network, which they considered crucial to the Compact's realization. Other Member States had become Global Compact champion countries; it was their hope that the champion country initiative, which involved countries from all regions, would build on the positive examples to date, promote peer-to-peer learning and boost implementation of the Compact. Others had drawn up or were preparing national migration plans. One Member State recommended that the Global Compact be implemented in line with the principle of State sovereignty and in the light of national contexts.

76. Two Member States observed that the challenges of implementing the Global Compact had been exacerbated by the effects of climate change, which affected developing countries in particular. Another noted that IOM's unique role as the lead United Nations organization on migration was more critical than ever in tackling the causes of displacement, in particular climate change. A fourth expressed interest in IOM's forthcoming strategy on migration and climate change, as building climate change resilience and improving disaster risk reduction remained crucial to addressing the root causes of migration.

77. Another frequently mentioned subject was IOM reform, and the outgoing Chairperson was widely applauded for his dedicated efforts to obtain a consensus on strengthening the Organization's senior leadership in the difficult conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic. More than ever, IOM had to be robust, efficient and have sufficient capacity; the COVID-19 pandemic had once again brought home the limitations of its current financial structure. The milestones reached in the reform process in 2020 were welcome, notably the decision to appoint two Deputy Directors General as of 2021, the first steps

taken towards budget reform, and the progress made on application of the Internal Governance Framework. More needed to be done in the short term, however, with the support of all Member States. Areas of particular concern were the further reinforcement of internal governance, including through improved results-based management, increased transparency and an independent evaluation function; the strengthening of IOM's internal justice system (the uptick in complaints to the Office of the Inspector General was evidence of the work that remained to be done in that area); further improvements to accessibility of IOM reporting mechanisms, including for beneficiaries; the ongoing, system-wide effort to fight sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment; and continued adaptation of the Organization's budgetary model with a view to developing a sustainable core funding structure with diverse funding sources and results-based budgeting.

78. One representative emphasized that the process of selecting the new Deputy Directors General should be guided by the need to ensure representation of different regions, especially those that were currently underrepresented in senior management. Several others remarked on the need to ensure geographical diversity and representation among IOM's staff and on the Council Bureau.

79. Several Member States announced their intention to contribute more to the Organization in the coming years, in particular in the form of core funding, and encouraged others to do the same. One Member State said that it would contribute EUR 6 million in voluntary unearmarked funds for the years 2020 to 2022, and that it would start multi-year programmatic cooperation with IOM in 2021 in the amount of EUR 55 million. Another Member State announced a recent government decision to provide an additional USD 3.3 million in voluntary contributions in 2020 for IOM activities in Africa. A third said that it intended to provide USD 10 million in additional flexible funding to help strengthen the Organization's core structure.

80. Three Member States exercised their right of reply in response to the statements of three other Member States, which thereafter also exercised their right to respond to the right of reply.

81. The Director General, responding to the statements made, thanked the Member States for their praise of IOM staff, which he would convey. IOM's flexibility and adaptability during the pandemic had been possible only thanks to the support of Member States, particularly those that had donated to the Global Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan and allowed IOM to redirect resources from existing programmes. Overcoming the crisis would require social as well as economic recovery; to that end, international mobility would have to resume alongside international trade, and the added value migrants had demonstrated in the fight against the pandemic should be taken into account. The pandemic had demonstrated the need to provide health care to all migrants so as to protect all individuals from the virus. It was therefore vital that migrants obtain access to the vaccine; while IOM would advocate for the full inclusion of migrants in national vaccination plans, it was also vital that the international community lend its support to that objective.

82. IOM was deeply concerned at the very negative economic and social impact of the reduction in remittances and by the challenges posed by the uncoordinated manner in which Member States were starting to open their borders, owing to differing rates of infection. International cooperation and a joint approach were required to ensure that everyone benefitted from the socioeconomic recovery, and IOM would endeavour to persuade Member States to integrate migrants fully into their plans to that effect. Members States should exchange information and best practices in that regard. In the longer term, the economic recession arising from COVID-19 would affect both countries of origin and destination. It was important, therefore, to have timely data on developments in that regard.

83. Clearly, the top priority for IOM in the short term was to pursue its engagement with the United Nations system and Member States in rising to the challenges posed by COVID-19. Steps also had to be taken to prepare for future global pandemics, including in the short term. To that end,



migration policies and processes – including border controls – would have to be adapted to incorporate health-related features such as screening, all of which would require investment in infrastructure and training.

84. Turning to the question of internal reform, he paid tribute to the work of the Deputy Director General in that regard and thanked Member States for their support and encouragement with regard to the Internal Governance Framework and the Business Transformation project in particular. Both were vital and would require guaranteed funding for four or five years. Contributions that would ensure their sustainability were therefore welcome. While the pandemic had slowed progress on the Internal Governance Framework, it had not stopped it. The Administration would continue to implement the Framework in accordance with the Work Plan that had been distributed and welcomed the pledges of unearmarked contributions made by several Member States for reform implementation. The rise in allegations of misconduct brought to the attention of the IOM internal justice system actually meant that staff had greater trust in the system. A great effort had been made to resolve the backlog of cases, many of which were under legal review. Diverse tools would be used to ensure that the entire Organization abided by all relevant regulations and procedures. The Administration would continue to consult with Member States on the funding model and budget reform, in a fully transparent manner.

85. Lastly, the Director General thanked those Member States that had volunteered to become Global Compact champion countries and encouraged others to do likewise or to donate to the Migration MPTF. IOM was mindful of the effects of climate change and environmental degradation on migration flows and planned to include that issue in its institutional strategy on migration, climate change and the environment.

#### **Closure of the session**

86. There being no other business, the Chairperson declared the 111th Session of the Council closed on Thursday, 26 November 2020, at 11.40 a.m.